



# PUNCH

OR

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## Charivaria

WE gather that the Vichy Government has given Washington an assurance that the French Fleet will remain in French hands, provided that nothing happens.

"Even now some people don't realize how severe the weather was all over the country in January," says a writer. But they should be round with their tools and blow-lamps any day now.

Talk of the FUEHRER's double is being revived. But there are probably only three HITLERS altogether, as the double is not fitted with an intuition.

We read of a Scottish comedian who has taken up the medicine ball in the place of golf. Of course it isn't so easy to lose a medicine ball.



An animal psychologist finds it possible to make a mouse feel faint by staring at it. Another good way is to show it a piece of cheese.

"Where Stands the Argentine?" asks a headline. Sorry, but we haven't seen to-day's map yet.

An advertiser in a weekly paper wants to exchange a dress-suit for a collection of moths. If he examines the garments he may realize that he had no need to advertise.

Soap is no longer supplied on trains. And the old economy is maintained of using passengers' gloves to clean carriage door-handles.



"I will not set foot in the Reich until the last Russian army has been annihilated," said the FUEHRER recently. Several of his generals haven't already.

The Germans are advised by Breslau radio speakers to expect more daylight raids by the R.A.F. . . . which they intended to do in any case.

It is pointed out that a previous vow made by the FUEHRER that he would set foot in Moscow when the Russian armies had been annihilated has now lapsed under the time-limit.

It is thought that Fleet Street will be allowed to announce the arrival of spring soon after the news of the first call of the cuckoo has been released by the Censor.

### In His Spare Time

"Homes in urgent need of domestic servants may soon receive help from Mr. Bevin."—*Daily Paper*.

Nazi agents in Arab countries are suborning the native astrologers to prophesy Britain's defeat. Our own view is that this war should be prevented from spreading over the whole planetary system.



### Ah, Well

"The education of shoppers seems to have been left to shopkeepers in too great a degree," he added. "If more time was spent by the Ministry in clearly explaining intricate points to worried housewives, we should be able to serve customers in nearly twice the time it takes us at present."—*Manchester Paper*.

A psychologist says that Herr HITLER and Signor MUSSOLINI must often think alike. Except that the FUEHRER always has the first think.

## Mist on the Mountains

(In *Jane's Fighting Ships* an approximate translation of the names of Japanese destroyers is given. *Yudati*, for instance, means "Evening Thunder Shower in Summer," *Sikinami*, "Waves chasing one another," *Numakaze*, "Wind in the Marsh. *Avi* is "Hollyhock," *Mutuki* is the "poetical name for January," *Hatuharu* "First Days of Spring," *Motiduki* "Full Moon," and so on.)

THE Japanese warships have wonderful names  
White Clouds of the Morning, White Clouds in  
the Hills,  
Haziness Diffusing Moonlight,  
And the Water of Rippling Rills.

I do not care much for these titles,  
They mean very little to me  
For I want all the Japanese warships  
At the bottom of the deep blue sea.

Full Moon and First Frost of the Season  
Persimmon and Lotus and Pear and the Silvery Tides  
May they be blasted for ever  
With holes in their sides.

May they sink in the trough of the ocean  
And if anyone cares to reclaim  
Their rusted hulls from the weed-beds  
And gives them to me to rename

I shall not call them Chrysanthemum  
Nor Mist in the Sky at Dawn,  
But Bamboo Bent in the Swamp-Hole  
And the Devil-Fishes' Spawn.

And Clouds of the Early Summer  
Shall be known as the Mud in the Pail  
And the Wind from the Sea in the Morning  
Be the Wind at the Monkey's Tail.

The Japanese warships have beautiful names  
But their beauty is nothing to me.  
I want the Fresh Verdure of Young Leaves  
To be drowned in the Depths of the Sea.

EVOR.

## Highly Condimentary

THE more I eat—that is to say, the less I eat—the more often I have my meals in popular restaurants (as we have long been encouraged to do, remember; so long as we don't spend more than four or five shillings a time) the firmer becomes my conviction that if the average eater-in-popular-restaurants were regularly given at his meals coloured hot water in place of soup, and coloured variously-shaped quite tasteless solids in place of the other courses, it would be quite a long time before he noticed anything wrong.

The old gibe at British cooking, I agree, is that these hypothetical conditions are fulfilled already, but let us not pursue that tempting path. What impresses me is that very-widespread habit of smothering everything with pepper and salt as soon as it arrives on the plate, before so much as a mouthful has been tasted. With many people this seems to be almost a reflex action; if the salt-and-pepper are out of

reach when the plate is delivered they fidget uncomfortably; they would no more think of touching the food before the ritual sprinkling than they would try to light a cigar before cutting off the end.

Given reasonably good cooking, it is arguable certainly that to demand pepper and salt and mustard at all indicates that one's palate is jaded. A young American having breakfast near me in the train the other day said No thanks to all of them; he did not use any condiments, he said, adding amiably "It's a *funny* way we eat." It may be that the average eater-in-popular-restaurants would point out knowingly that the young man obviously had not been in this country long enough to get into the habit of *not* expecting reasonably good cooking; but I doubt it. I think the habit is in fact nothing but a habit: a ritual gesture; almost a reflex action.

And one it would be just as well to get out of, for the sake of economy. Mustard I'm not sure about—though restaurants are undoubtedly economising on the mustard by making it thinner (it is impossible for you to take too much mustard if every spoonful dribbles down into the middle of the plate; if you need more you have to take more, but you can't load your plate with a mound to begin with and have three-quarters of it left at the end of the meal). But pepper and salt I have been looking up, and it seems that about half the entire crop of pepper used to come from Penang. There is nothing for it but to go easy on the pepper. As for salt, I am astonished to find that the Encyclopædia says: "The workings in Great Britain represent the annual abstraction of rather more than a mass of rock equal to a foot in thickness spread over a square mile." This sounds to me like a lot too much salt, particularly when there are so few eggs.

Among the things neither here nor there that I unearthed in my researches is the fact, possibly known to you, that the expression "salt-cellar" is a tautological one, "cellar" having been corrupted from the French *saler*, so that "salt-cellar" really means "salt-salt." I don't expect this information to affect you much. I haven't yet found out about the expression "pepper-castor," but I have hopes of discovering that it is a corruption of "pepper-castor" where "castor" means, as the *O.E.D.* says, "a reddish-brown unctuous substance, having a strong smell and nauseous bitter taste, obtained from two sacs in the inguinal region of the beaver." Thus the expression "pepper-castor" really would mean "pepper-pepper" when used by people with a militant dislike of pepper. Whether there are many people with a militant dislike of pepper I don't know, but they must be having some interesting experiences with the war-time sausage.

This brings us back, none too soon, to the people with what might almost be called a militant *liking* for pepper and salt. It was they—at least I don't *think* it was them—that I set out to write about, but I am happy to observe how little room there is left.

Only a week or so ago Mr. J. F. Wolfenden was reported to have told a conference of youth leaders and teachers that young people will not respond to a diet of dart-boards and ping-pong balls. What I say is, if they are in the habit of smothering everything with condiments without tasting it first, dart-boards and ping-pong balls is the diet they might just as well be given. Young people with strong uninjured ostrich-like digestions—they'd never notice a sliver of double-top or a stray hemisphere of celluloid after they'd dredged it up from the salt and pepper; any more than they notice enough to mind now when they are given what I have heard described as "typical English food—good, plain, wholesome, unpretentious, nourishing, tasteless and tough."

R. M.



### GOBBLING MARKET

"Leering at each other,  
Brother with queer brother;  
Signalling each other  
Brother with sly brother . . .

"Come buy, come buy" . . .  
In tones as smooth as honey,  
The cat-faced purr'd,  
The rat-paced spoke a word . . ."





*"I'm afraid my coupons are loose—but I have brought witnesses who will give evidence that they are genuine and cut from my own ration-book."*

### Little Talks

**L**ET go!  
One moment, Skipper, I am not quite—

Let go the anchor!  
Skipper, I am not wholly satisfied with the banking system.

What! Let go, you —!

Unless, Captain, it is made clear that we are fighting for a Better World, I cannot put my whole heart into—

About Better Worlds I know little, Seaman Smoot. But I can tell you that unless you obey my orders we shall soon be fighting in Another World. For, the engine having mysteriously ceased to function, we are being carried by a strong tide in the direction of

yonder rocks. Accordingly, without for a moment wishing to interfere with that right of self-expression which is so valuable a part of the British heritage, I again suggest that you let go the anchor.

Captain, I see of course that on a short-term view of the sit—

A what?

On a short-term view of the situation, Captain, there is an element of plausibility in what you say. Looking forward, however, as any thinking man must look forward, to the post-war period—

You mean "after the war," Seaman Smoot?

Aye, aye, Sir.

But pardon me, Seaman Smoot, I keep hearing upon the wireless appeals and exhortations from our statesmen, the main purport of which appears to be that no man should be diverted from the war-effort by consideration of what may happen to him after the war. Did not Sir Stafford Cripps—?

It is true, I think, Sir, that severe things have been said, and justly, about self-seeking merchants and employers who tend to govern their actions of to-day by their anxieties for the future. But that is different—

How?

Obviously, Sir.



Are they not thinking of the Better World?

No, Sir. They are thinking of the Bad Old World Before the War, to which, I for one, can never go back.

My boy, you'll be darned lucky if you do. However, go on. They are thinking about "after the war" in a bad way—and you in a noble way? Is that right?

In effect, Sir, yes, though you express yourself embarrassingly. I try at least, to keep my aspirations for the post-war period unselfish and general.

Bravo, my man.

I should like to think, for example, that in the post-war period—

"After the war," please.

After the war—the key industries of the nation were owned and run by the nation, and not for private profit. The thought that they are not, Skipper, produces in me a brooding sense of injustice and frustration, which makes it difficult for me to let go the—

Brood for a moment, Seaman, will you, while I speak to the Engineer? It may be that he and his engines will ease this disquieting position for you. I hope so, indeed; for the rocks are really extremely close. . . . Pray, Mr. Engineer, how soon may we expect the power units to roar into action again? And what, by the way, is the trouble? Is it that valve again—or perhaps the ignition?

No, Sir. I have tested the mechanism at every point, and find no defect. The fault, I fear, is rather in myself. I have to confess that the engines are short of fuel, a state of affairs which you will readily understand when I tell you that this morning I quite inexcusably forgot to fill the tanks again.

Such a thing might happen to anyone, Mr. Engineer. I dare say you were worrying about some of our post-war problems?

Well, Sir, since you mention it, I am considerably exercised in my mind. Are we, I have asked myself, going in the right direction?

Not at the moment, Chief. In fact, the sooner the engines are once more supplied with—

Have we an adequate chart of the future? Do we—

Speaking for myself—

Are we making the right approach to the more spiritual elements in Germany, elements without whose co-operation we cannot hope to get a juster synthesis? What have we done to bind the Lapps to us? In India, in Asia, in Anatolia, are we looking forward—?

Pray look astern, Chief; then fill the petrol-tanks, while I address the Seaman, who has self-questionings too. You were saying, I think, my

friend, that you would feel more happy in the simple duties allotted to you if you could be sure that after the war everything would be run by the Government. By the way, what was your occupation in peace-time?

Sir, I wrote for the papers.

Indeed? And do you want the papers to be run by the Government?

Certainly not, Sir.

I understand that. Nothing could be more unpopular to-day than the Government and the Civil Servants, because they run nearly everything. But your dream of general bliss is that they should run everything else—except yourself. I cannot see why you should be spared: indeed, it seems to me that your post-war programme is not quite so unselfish as—. The question, however, is mainly academic, for here we are at the rocks. By the way, can either of you reformers swim?

No, Sir.

A pity.

A. P. H.

## Pre-O.C.T.U.

From Sapper Symphon to Sapper Coop  
MUDFORD,

Tuesday

DEAR GEORGE—My fellow commission-candidates and myself would be most interested to hear how you are getting on, and what exactly happens on a Pre-O.C.T.U. course, as we want to get ourselves prepared for the day when we too are wadded to this first step towards a pip.

Things are much as usual here except that Lieutenant Findon is on leave and the food seems better.

Your old pal, OSCAR.

From Sapper Coop to Sapper Symphon  
SHAKINGHAM TRAINING CENTRE,

Friday

DEAR OSCAR,—I am getting on fine here, but things are awfully rushed and I can only scribble a hasty note. One of the most curious features of the place is that they can't make up their minds whether you get 1, 1½, or 2 sausages for breakfast. The tables are long seven-a-side affairs and first of all you pass all the plates, beginning from the end, and after a long interval your plate comes back with one sausage on it. Just as you are spearing it on your fork another seven sausages arrive and they work out this means another half each, so off your plate is whisked, and presently it returns with a half-sausage added.

Unfortunately your one original sausage, which before was a huge fat

thing like a retired R.S.M., has shrunk into the shape of a P.T. instructor or a sanitary engineer, making you suspect that you have got the wrong plate. A rapid reconnaissance enables you to discover your own retired R.S.M. sausage just being speared by a man at the other end of the table, and you open negotiations for a just settlement.

At that moment a further seven sausages arrive, and when they have worked out that this means another half each, the plates are all passed up to the end again, and you wait hopefully, trusting that this time your original retired R.S.M. sausage will return, with two half-sausages nestling coyly by its side. Instead you get a china plate with nothing on it but a smear of mustard and a portrait of Queen Victoria and two half-sausages.

While you are brooding over this somebody remarks casually that it is 8.10 and you remember with a sinking heart that you have to clean your buttons and be on parade by 8.30, leaving Queen Victoria in sole possession of the sausages.

The other curious thing here is the official attitude to respirators, anti-gas, men, for the use of. The first morning we all went on parade with them, but as soon as we got there the corporal laughed a mocking laugh and said, Did we expect a gas attack? So we took our respirators back to the huts and paraded again. On our return the sergeant said that the Army was going to the dogs, with potential officers being chosen from such nit-wits as ourselves, who did not know that respirators were always worn on parade. We fetched them.

The Major seemed, from his choler at the sight of our respirators, to have a deep-rooted distaste for any device likely to prolong our worthless lives. We went back, full of shame, and cast them from us.

The Colonel said that he would overlook it this once, but if any man appeared on parade again without his respirator he would be R.T.U. immediately.

I hope what I have told you will help you to prepare yourselves for the pre-O.C.T.U. course, which I can tell you will make you wish you were dead. I also hope you will not have long to wait for it.

Your old pal, GEORGE.

## Impending Apology

"The Rev. —, Assistant Curate of this Parish, has been appointed Chaplain of an A.T.S. Camp of over five hundred women. He needs our prayers."—Parish Magazine.

## Americans in the Office

I WAS just saying to Doris now soap's rationed what are you to give people next Christmas when who should walk in but our American director as large as life and dumped another zipp bag on the table and beamed at us.

And if anyone had told me three years ago we'd beam back, I'd never have believed them and neither would Doris. He was just a pain in the neck to us then, wanting to put up mottos like *Work like Ellen B. Merry* and *There's no Fun like Work* when there wasn't a war on either, him and his pep talks and those efficiency experts who were about as much good as a sick headache. As I told Mr. Head, the way they went on you'd think you'd only to set the typewriter at the Regulo mark and come back and take the work out when it was ready.

Good riddance we all thought when he went back that September it all started, and that was one thing at any rate to thank Hitler for. Though to give him his due I believe he'd have stayed, but what could the man do with his wife screaming cables at him day and night, and you know what Americans' wives are like—never can leave them alone five minutes together.

Then if he didn't take the wind out of our sails by starting sending us parcels: tea and sugar of course but butter and grape-fruit and lovely bacon in a glass jar just like the cat's-meat you used to get. One for every single person in the place, Works and all, not one left out, and I could just hear him saying, "Noo York for business efficiency every time!" Well, it's the first time I've ever had any use for business efficiency because as far as I've ever been able to make out, the efficiency takes up so much time you've got none left for the business.

But who'd ever have thought of us all getting so thrilled over plain dull groceries—when you come to think of it, that's all they are!

After that of course I took back all I'd ever said about him. That's the worst of this war: you just never know where you are with all the people you couldn't stand suddenly sprouting wings like this. When I think of all the things I've said about our canteen . . . and yet I've been glad of them many a time this last year when if you did go out to lunch for a change all you got was something different crossed off the menu.

This American director of ours was always writing to us when he got back

about "our war," and Doris and I often said as far as we were concerned they could have it for keeps. And now they're in it themselves, poor things! So of course that was the first thing we asked about, and he quite cheered us up.

It's our inning next, he says, and then it's the Japs for an outing when we start batting, U.S. and us together, and he's never been warm since he got off the boat. He never did think a lot of our climate, and after these three winters you can quite understand. Shouldn't think he'll be wanting much iced-water this trip either.

Anyway we shan't have the rushes we used to have to catch the American mail on Fridays now you never know whether there is one, and anyway the censorship'll hold it up if you do. And there won't be the bother nowadays fixing up appointments with all the people he wants to see all over the place before he sails. He could always manage two lunches at a pinch, but that odd time he had to squeeze three in and he'd left his bicarb. at the hotel was just too bad.

You can say what you like but Americans do liven things up. It quite makes you feel the war's over to have him blowing in and out again to dictate or look up an Address or grumble at the telephone or tell us he's behind skedule as per usual. Our new office boy just can't take his eyes or ears off him for a moment, though what's to happen to Willie's spelling now I don't know, what with checks and only one "I" in traveler.

I often think it's queer the way you get out of things so soon. Before he went back before we'd quite got him into our ways, except of course for the efficiency, and then yesterday I found he'd addressed a "postal" to *Glasgow, Eng.* One of our best clients, too. Reminded me of the time he sent our Scotch Works Manager all up in the air. Quite an afternoon that was. All because he asked him would he see the new stuff went off marked *MADE IN ENGLAND* and not *BRITISH MANUFACTURE* because people in the Far East didn't understand it meant just the same.

Jim, my boy friend in the Drawing Office, says he could do with Americans if they weren't all of them either hard boiled or half baked. There are times myself when they make me feel either sixteen or sixty, and sometimes both at once, but I tell him it doesn't do to believe all you see on the films. I

shan't ever forget one American we had in here once from Chicago. He'd brought in a whole lot of stuff to go through, and Doris and I thought he'd never go, and suddenly he said did we mind if he stopped for a drink, and of course we said no, and I wondered would he mind if I said no-thank-you because I never did like whisky. And he took out his zipp bag and ate a sandwich while we waited, and then he dived in again and fished out a bottle and sat back and had a nice long drink of milk.

I do hope he got back before the cut.

## The Approaching Season

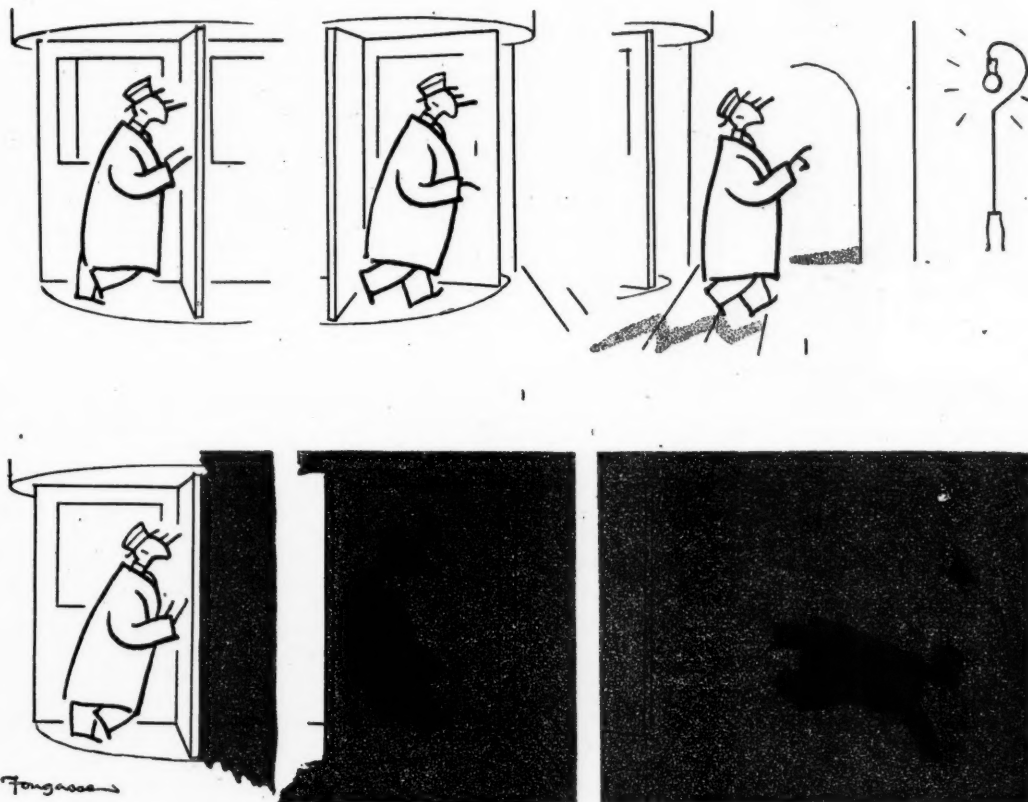
THE 1942 cricket season promises to be the most successful in my career. I can look forward with confidence to an improvement in my batting average, a reduction in my fielding fatigue, and a marked diminution of my post-tea-interval dyspepsia. These changes will be due almost entirely to reasons beyond my control. I will explain.

To begin with, I still have my favourite bat—the one with the clicking handle. It has served me well in the past. It will, no doubt, rescue me many times in the future. Bats which click are usually considered dangerous in the extreme. County cricketers quake at the prospect of a near-miss being construed by the umpire as a touch. In my case it is just the opposite. As I walk to the wicket, eighth down, I direct my steps so that I pass both umpires—it is of course only a courtesy call with old Hoggett—and as I approach them with a devil-may-care grin I swish my bat through the air so that a repetition of clicks is heard all over the ground. An umpire then says "I should change that bat, my lad. It will get you out!" "It always does," I laugh. "Still, it's only a game, and I can trust you, Sir." I take my guard relatively immune from caught-behind-the-wicket decisions.

Now for many years my favourite shot has been a leg-glide played in the Ranjitsinhji style with legs crossed. Unfortunately the stroke has seldom brought me more than a single, for the boundary at Chagworth is deep and I am not particularly fast between the wickets. This year, however, the

## THE CHANGING HABITS OF BRITAIN

## EXIT THROUGH REVOLVING DOOR



leg-glide should be more profitable, for the boundary-line is now thirty yards—or two allotments—nearer the wicket.

You know how it is—every batsman at some time or another gets out in a manner which to him appears unaccountable. Sutcliffe, I believe, is often caught at long-leg: my weakness is on the middle stump. When I say weakness I certainly do not mean that there is a technical flaw in my cricketing armour, but that a fast ball pitched on my middle stump tends to find my blind spot. Every cricketer knows what that means. Inquiries addressed to the secretaries of the clubs in the district reveal that every fast bowler of note has now been called to the colours. Slow bowlers are seldom able to locate my blind spot, so that my innings should be long and fruitful.

When to all these satisfactory items is added the fact that I have consumed vast quantities of carrots and other foods rich in Vitamin C during the winter months, it should be fairly obvious that I shall see the ball as big as a barrage balloon.

Turning to the question of fielding, I can face the future without the customary foreboding. I am not a light weight, and the journey from long-stop at the church end to long-stop at the pavilion end has for many years proved a sore trial of my temper and stamina. Our captain now informs me that he is prepared to lease the position at mid-on for the duration,

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

since he is moving to take Corporal Hackett's place at second slip.

I shall be much happier at mid-on. I shall be able to talk to the batsmen between the overs, and my proximity to the captain will give greater weight to my mute appeals to be given an over or two with my off-spinners.

Finally, there is the mixed blessing of the decision to cancel the tea interval. The Ladies' Committee has announced that owing to the extension of food rationing it will be impossible to provide solid refreshments this year. While I shall certainly miss the delicious doughnuts of Mrs. Crabtree and the Eccles cakes of Mrs. Spiffins, I shall also miss the pangs of flatulence which invariably follow their consumption.

Yes, 1942 promises to be an eventful season, whatever the military situation.





"Try and get me some clothing coupons, dear."

## Experiences of a Junior Officer

The Doom of Colonel Matchwood

**I** SUPPOSE my position in the British Army is really rather an unusual one. Ever since that disastrous beginning when I found myself posted to a regiment of cannibals, I have posted myself where I pleased without consulting the War Office. High-handed, some people may say. But I know better. If the Germans want to draw conclusions about the state of the British Army from my experiences, they are welcome to do so.

Having what you might call a roving commission, I often found myself without any definite appointment. It was during one of these periods that I happened to be sitting in the Electricians' Arms at Castle Filter one summer's morning. As I toiled with my pink gin, a number of young officers entered. Alarm and despondency were written on their faces. I could not help hearing their conversation.

"He's getting worse."

"Absolutely."

"What on earth are we to do?"

A person of unusual penetration, I began to realize that something was wrong. Could I help? I found the young men curiously uncommunicative. When I suggested posting myself to their regiment they looked blank but made no objection.

The thing was settled. My simple baggage—a prismatic compass, some assorted Army forms and a pair of clean socks—was to be sent on after me. We entered the Mess. Colonel Matchwood, a square grey man, stood with his back to the fire talking to himself. Everything was very pleasant and normal. And then suddenly the Colonel drew himself up and slowly struck the hour of one. Everyone looked embarrassed for a moment. We sat down to an excellent lunch. Conversation flowed again. I heard the Adjutant holding forth to the Second-in-Command on the influence of Calderon on the Restoration Drama. It was the sort of

scene that was being enacted in hundreds of officers' messes throughout the country at that moment. And then, at half-past one, the Colonel suddenly stopped and struck a single chime. Again came that embarrassed silence.

After lunch one of the younger officers took me aside and told me the whole dismal story. One morning, twelve months before, during a ceremonial parade, Colonel Matchwood had suddenly struck twelve. The thing had gone on ever since. Apart from believing himself to be a clock, the Colonel was quite normal. But all suggestions were in vain, especially as no one dared openly allude to the disability. Vainly the Adjutant hinted that he himself was a sundial. Training came to a standstill. Since it would have injured the men's morale irretrievably had they seen the Colonel in that condition, they had all been confined to their billets for a year now. They were getting a little unhealthy for lack of exercise.

Such was the position. All that day I heard that strange chiming in the distance. It got on my nerves. Colonel Matchwood was the sort of clock that plays tunes at various hours. At noon he played "Annie Laurie," at midnight Handel's "Largo." Could nothing be done? Could nothing dispel the strange curse that lay on the 45th Northamptonshire Borderers?

Next morning portentous news arrived. In a week's time there was to be an inspection by the Brigadier. Consternation reigned everywhere. No work had been done in the camp for over a year. The Brigadier might easily notice it. In the circumstances it was natural that the task of finding a solution should devolve on me. The Second-in-Command and Company Commanders threw up their hands in despair. The Quartermaster drowned himself. The other subalterns locked themselves in cupboards. I was left alone.

Desperate situations demand desperate remedies. For a start, I ordered the entire camp to be covered with blanco. All metal objects were to be polished, all woodwork to be varnished. As I went about the camp I saw that the men, so long idle, were taking a real pride in their work. Even the stray cats with which the place abounded had been varnished, the very tree in the Officers' Mess garden had been polished. I passed here and there, admiring. If I could only get the Colonel out of the way, all would yet be well.

"Get the clock in 'A' Company office varnished, Roberts," I said to an orderly.

At that moment the Colonel struck eleven in the distance. Now I had the solution!

That very afternoon a fatigue-party approached the Colonel's office warily. I kept watch through the window, but the Colonel made no resistance. In half an hour the work was done. Colonel Matchwood really looked like a clock now, varnished and brightly shining. As an afterthought a bracket was put up fixing him to the wall. He seemed pleased.

Next day the Brigadier arrived. As I followed him round the camp I could see that he was delighted.

"Very nice, very nice," he murmured, pausing before some man's bedding which, glued together and varnished, made a most attractive display. Finally we came to the Colonel's office.

"Very nice, very nice," said the Brigadier. "But what's this?" He prodded the Colonel with his stick. The Colonel did not move. He had obviously stopped.

"Not a great deal of use," said the Brigadier. "Can you get it mended?"

"No, Sir. It's got no works."

"Well, have it removed."

"Very well, Sir."

And as the Brigadier left by the front gate of the camp, Colonel Matchwood left by the back gate in a plain van bound for a well-known furniture repository not a hundred miles from Clapham Junction. The curse was lifted from the 45th Northamptonshire Borderers.

## Bees and the R.A.F. Again

### III

**N**OS. 1 and 2 Bee Squadrons, Prangmere Wing, were last week ultimately installed in their new hangars on the Mess lawn. The operation was highly eventful, and not without casualties on both sides. Yesterday the Mess went into Committee to discuss the bees' general behaviour.

Group-Captain Boost opened the proceedings by saying how was the Bee Wing getting along, what a day that had been, to see Squadron-Leader Undercart homing all out for the Mess with a fighter bee on his tail had been worth a million dollars. Squadron-Leader Undercart said he was glad the bee had been only metaphorically on his tail, and as for homing all out, no such thing, sir, he was merely taking normal avoiding action and had the situation well under control.

Pilot-Officer Rudder said in his opinion calm and steady nerves were needed for dealing with the Bee Squadrons, particularly when passing close to their hangars, he personally was now using the back entrance to the Mess. Pilot-Officer Nosedyeve said him too, by gum. Group-Captain Boost said if they couldn't get acclimatized to a few bees round the Mess it was a poor show, besides the swelling on his (Nosedyeve's) jaw was going down nicely and couldn't still be painful, anyway his face now looked a little less like a pot-bellied ostrich-egg. Pilot-Officer Nosedyeve said oh he said, really, sir.

Flying-Officer Flaps said he also did not care for passing too close to the hangars with bees taxiing in and out all day and liable to make an operational sortie any minute. Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute, concurring, said he certainly preferred to sit by the window and watch them through glass instead of . . . Flying-Officer Talespin said did he say through a glass, or just . . . Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute said very swiftly that was extremely kind of Flying-Officer Talespin and his was a beer.

Wing-Commander Blower pointed out that the Bee Wing's flying discipline was lousy, only the previous night as he was returning to the Mess in the dusk, a large four-engined bee, showing no navigation lights, landed without permission on the back of his neck, having apparently failed to make its own base through faulty homing procedure. Pilot-Officer Prune, reminiscently fingering a swelling on his forehead acquired during the previous week's bee blitz, said with emphasis he would like to see the entire Bee Wing fitted with long-range tanks and briefed for a long cross-country in search of some hypothetical field where the clover grew as big as dahlias, the general object of the exercise being that with luck they'd get out of W/T touch with their base and never never return. Pilot-Officer Nosedyeve said wizard idea, chaps.

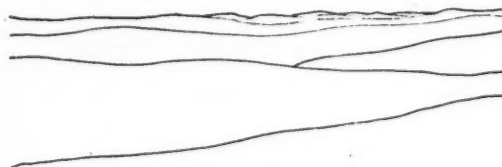
Flying-Officer Flaps said all he'd got to say was that he, gosh, what was that droning sound, there was a dive-bombing bee loose in the Mess. Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute said not to jump like that for Pete's sake, he (Flaps) had upset his (Lyne-Shute's) beer, waiter again please, on Flying-Officer Flaps. Flying-Officer Flaps said, no, waiter,

be damned to that, let him buy his own, there was only a drop in it anyway, he'd been had like that before. Pilot-Officer Airscrew, Station Bee-Master, said didn't Flying-Officer Flaps know the difference between a dive-bombing bee inside a room and a harmless reconnaissance bee outside doing tight turns round a rhododendron while waiting permission to land and refuel.

Group-Captain Boost said he was sick of all this binding about bees who never hurt anyone unless provoked. Wing-Commander Blower said that was all very well, sir, but he (Group-Captain Boost) had been on the safe side of the window last week and so hadn't had the painful experience of a squirt from a quite unprovoked bee's rear gunner. Group-Captain Boost rather stiffly said that was nothing whatever to do with it, and called on Pilot-Officer Airscrew to state officially whether bees deliberately took the offensive. Pilot-Officer Airscrew confirmed that bees did not attack without provocation, for in the nice bee, sir, did not a sense so subtly true, sir, from even poisonous herbs, extract the healing dew, sir, Alexander Pope, sir. Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute spoke monosyllabically. Pilot-Officer Prune, again fingering the swelling on his forehead, said that let that be as it might, some bees couldn't tell the difference between a poisonous herb and him (Prune). Flying-Officer Talespin said *what* difference, and Wing-Commander Blower said now boys, chuck it, mind the furniture . . .

Group-Captain Boost said he wished they'd stop nattering about bees, what about honey, honey, honey, which was what they started keeping bees for anyway, yes, HONEY.

Pilot-Officer Airscrew said ah, sir, time alone, sir, would show, sir. A. A.



"I shan't need you this evening, Tomkins."



*"Is this nonsense yours?"*

### *Progress*

**W**HEN I became a Gunner  
In 1939  
All Nature seemed to tell me  
How low a rank was mine.  
The Officers, Olympians,  
Were miles beyond my ken,  
The Bombardiers and Sergeants  
Were more than mortal men.  
They drilled me and dragooned me  
And drove me when I failed.  
As for the Sergeant Major—  
The Battery Sergeant Major . . .  
Before the Sergeant Major  
I bowed my head and quailed.

And then in 1940  
I rose to Bombardier,  
And somehow life was brighter,  
Held something more than fear.  
Officers overwhelmed me,  
I'm willing to confess,  
But here and there a Sergeant  
Appalled me rather less.  
The Lancejacks and the Gunners  
Referred to me as "Blitz,"

But still the Sergeant Major—  
The Battery Sergeant Major . . .  
Alas! the Sergeant Major  
Could scare me into fits.

But since I've been commissioned  
Life's worn her rosiest hue—  
Amazing what a difference  
Comes with a pip or two!  
Two Captains pinch my collars,  
The Major calls me "Pete,"  
Even the gilded Colonel  
Is civil when we meet.  
The N.C.O.s and Gunners  
Stir at my lightest breath;  
As for the Sergeant Major—  
The Battery Sergeant Major . . .  
Well, yes, the Sergeant Major  
Still frightens me to death!

o o

"WHAT DO I DO . . . IF I KEEP HENS?"

*M.O.I. Notice.*

You keep rats, probably.





THE CITY MAN 1942

"Hi-ho! Hi-ho! It's off to work we go!"

## Impressions of Parliament

### Business Done

**Tuesday, March 3rd.**—House of Lords: Defence of India is Discussed.

House of Commons: Food for All—Not Forgetting the Black Marketeers.

**Wednesday, March 4th.**—House of Commons: The Air Estimates.

**Thursday, March 5th.**—House of Commons: Woman- and Lung-Power Claim Attention.

**Tuesday, March 3rd.**—Strange things have happened in the House of Commons of late. But none more strange than the sight of gentle-mannered, witty, popular Major GWILYM LLOYD GEORGE, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food, standing at the Treasury Box breathing fire and slaughter and prophesying something with boiling oil in it.

There he stood, his nostrils fairly quivering with rage, his eyes flashing with righteous indignation, his words hard, his voice harsh. And the cause of this metamorphosis? The operators of the Black Market in foodstuffs.

The House warmly cheered the Major's description of the Shape of Things to Come to these gentry and, indeed, vied with him in thinking of unpleasant little tweaks and twists to add to the punishments by which it was sought to take the profit out of this Sable Bourse.

For although they were no threat to our National Larder, said the Major, Black Marketeers were a serious threat to our national morale, because they created discontent between the "Haves" and the "Have Nots." Anyway, it was not fair, and anything that was not fair should be extirpated, good, hard and proper, just as much from national as from international affairs.

Sticking out his jaw, Major LLOYD GEORGE promised that something pretty hectic was to come when the Defence Regulation had been adjusted. Whereat Father DAVID and Sister MEGAN, sitting in their accustomed places on the Opposition side of the House—but looking as if opposition were far, far from their minds—led the cheers. Smiling Mrs. GWILYM, in the Gallery, was not allowed a cheer. She is a "Stranger."

It was a supremely competent speech, full of wise sayings and little touches of wit which even a brief full

of figures (and a tendency to inaudibility) could not obscure. He lamented the virtual passing of the egg ("which has contributed so much to our national humour"), but foretold more tenanted egg-cups in the months to

in the speech. Major LLOYD GEORGE answered, for instance, the age-old problem: "Why Do Men Leave Home?" Apparently (in the modern version, at any rate) it is because one home-produced square meal for a hearty male means that the family's rations have to be raided, to the detriment of the said family. So the wise worker has his meals in the canteen at the works or the office. Some 15,000,000 meals a week are served in the canteens that get "extra special rations" (and whose patrons give in return extra special rations of service to the war effort) and 28,000,000 a week in canteens that get just "extra" rations.

All of which was quite right and proper, and not in any sense dodging the rationing plan. Workers were meant to have more.

But there was another little problem that was not so easy to answer, and no answer had yet been found. This:

*The national wholemeal loaf is best for the health of the nation. But if we have it, it means that there will be no "left-overs" to feed the poultry and cattle. That, in turn, means that there will be less meat, milk and eggs. And that means that there will be less variety in our national diet. And to cap it all, the public does not like the national wholemeal loaf.*

So what? How do we solve that little problem?

The Major did not say.

Rations might have to be cut, we might have to pull in the national belt, we might even have to go without any sort of luxury, but we should not starve, and our confidence and health and morale would thrive, come (or fail to come) what might.

With a few more snorts at the Black Marketeers, the Major sat down, to give place to Member after Member who wanted to hit the creatures *really* hard. All this fooling about with trifles like penal servitude for life was waste of time, they said. What was wanted was flogging. Or shooting. Or burying in quick-lime up to the pockets, while their bank balances slowly wilted and died before their very eyes.

**Wednesday, March 4th.**—Tweedledum and Tweedledee caused a lot of quiet fun in the House of Commons to-day. The two parts were played by Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS and Mr. CLEMENT ATTLEE, both War Cabinet Ministers. The arrangement is (or was) that Sir STAFFORD shall answer questions



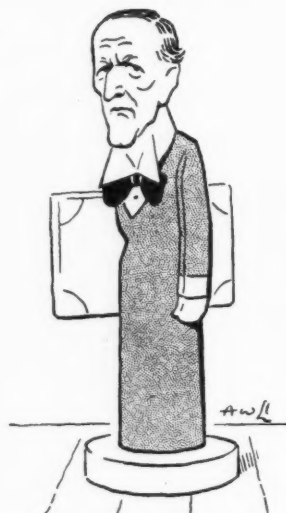
### CATERING FOR THE FUTURE

"I cannot tell what will happen to the activities of the Ministry of Food when peace comes."

*The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food.*

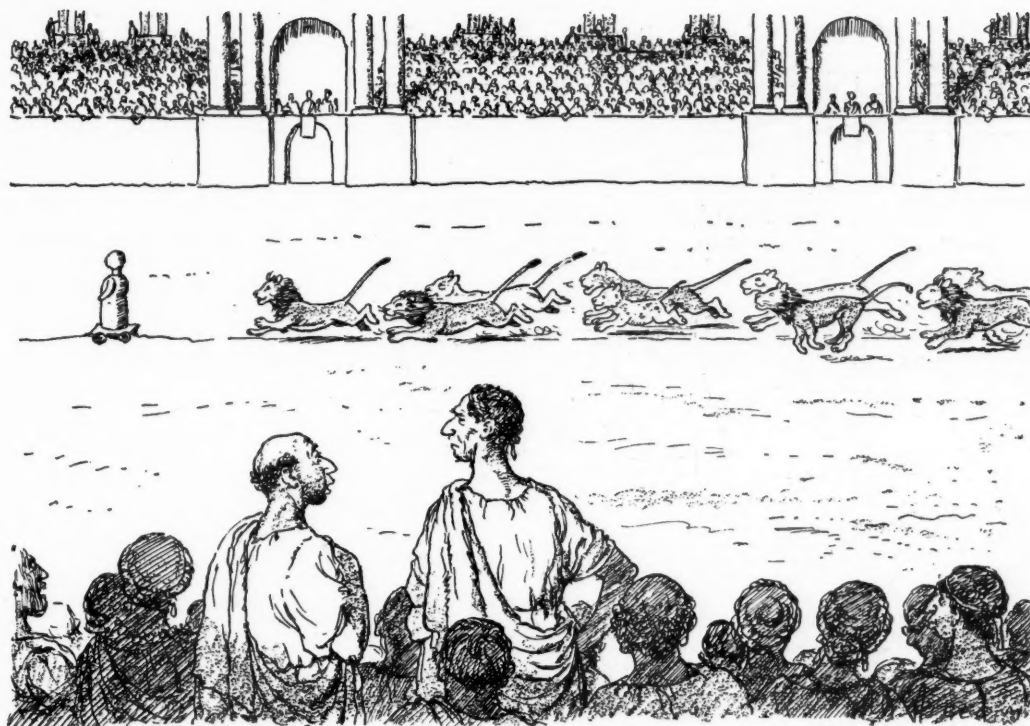
come. "Good or bad?" queried sceptical Mr. EVELYN WALKDEN. "Good!" he was assured, a trifle rashly.

There were many "human touches"



### MINISTER OF POST-DILUVIAN RECONSTRUCTION

SIR WILLIAM JOWITT



*"I still think it was better sport when we had live Christians."*

addressed to the PREMIER on matters affecting the business of the House, Mr. ATTLEE all others.

Then up rose Sir STAFFORD and answered a question about the Court of Inquiry into the escape of the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*. Members asked each other how this came into the "business of the House" category. But trifles of that sort do not bother Messrs. T. and T. Mr. ATTLEE blithely answered a question. Then Sir STAFFORD.

It seemed to be a case of "United we speak as one individual, taking alternate questions." Members now enjoy themselves in this newest of lucky dips, putting down questions to the PRIME MINISTER and having little sweepstakes on who answers. Innocent fun.

Sir WALDRON SMITHERS had down (but did not ask) a question why the Never Again Association was not allowed to broadcast. The question seemed to answer itself, if read with attention.

Reference was made to the gates and railings around the Worcestershire estate of Lord BALDWIN of Bewdley, as to the surrender of which, for war purposes, there had been some dispute.

Mr. GEORGE HICKS, of the appropriate Government Department, said the rails and gates had all been "safely gathered in" with the exception of some gates given to the noble Lord on his retirement.

Whereupon Captain ALAN GRAHAM (Con., The Wirral) asked whether these gates should not be retained "to protect Lord BALDWIN from the just indignation of the mob."

The House gasped at as neat a piece of bad taste as any it had heard for a long time. "That was a rotten thing to say!" rapped a Labour man, and the rest of the House let the gallant Captain know its opinion by a frigid silence.

But good-humour was recovered in time for Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Air Minister, who was making one of his rare visits to the House. He *had* to come this time, for he was to move the Air Estimates. But he left it so late that his Under-Secretary, Captain BALFOUR, was on the point of dispatching search-parties when he hurried in, all portfolios and notes. However, it was a good speech.

It was a story of the R.A.F., its achievements and ambitions. Both,

apparently, are boundless. It seemed as if the speech was to be boundless too, but it ended at last and the House went on to talk about every conceivable (and some inconceivable) aspect of the work of that great organization.

Not an exciting day, but one that gave a thrill of pride to all who know of the work of the R.A.F.

He told of the great raid on Renault's motor works outside Paris the night before and promised more and bigger bombs on Germany in the months to come.

Mr. GARRO-JONES unkindly suggested that the Minister should bark a bit occasionally, instead of perpetually purring. But Sir ARCHIBALD just purred.

*Thursday, March 5th.*—The lady M.P.s had a fine time to-day, with a debate on woman-power. Few males stayed to interrupt them or to join in the private fight.

Mr. ROBERT GRIMSTON made, amid cheers, his debut as Assistant Postmaster-General, answering a question in the brisk (and audible) tones appropriate to the Commander of the Parliamentary Home Guard.





FUN AND GAMES FOR THE FORCES

## This Will Astonish You!

(It did me)

By Smith Minor

I'M not really sure whether I ought to write this article, it being in a way rather delicate, but when I put it to Green, he said, "Why not?"

"Well, it's rather delicate," I said to him, like I've just said to you.

"I grant you it would be if it was about people," said Green, "but not about rabbits."

"I see what you mean," I said, seeing, "but even about rabbits it still seems delicate."

"If you think that, you oughtn't to keep them," he said. "My own opinion is that people ought to know."

"That's true," I said. "I never thought of that."

So that decided me, and I am now, to drop into French for a minute, *prenant la risque*. You see, you may be on the verge of keeping rabbits, and if you are you ought to know before you do what may happen. I didn't.

Strictly speaking I didn't begin by keeping rabbits, I began by keeping only one, and the reasons I only had one were, i.e.:

(1) I didn't know much about them.

(2) I already had 4 rats, nine goldfish, and a large spider that gives a lot of trouble. (Note about the spider. Its body is two and a half

(2½) inches long, its eyes sort of stick out, it has fifteen legs, it lost one when I was catching it, though mind you I was careful, but it seems to think fifteen enough, and it has a kind of redish hair. I'm not sure it's a spider. End of note about the spider.)

(3) It being given me, I was only given one.\*

How I came to be given it was like this. It was rather curious. I was walking along, thinking rather deep thoughts like I do sometimes, they never come to anything, but I think them, when I walked into a man's stummack, who, being bigger than me, I was the one who went over. I go over very easily. Well, he picked me up, and thinking I looked a bit pail, which I felt, he took me into his house so I could sit down for a bit. He seemed to rather like me somehow or other, mind you, I don't know why, and when I'd got my breath back and could talk, he said, "What's your name?"

"Smith," I said.

"I wish mine was," he said.

"Why?" I said.

"Because mine is Doowinkle," he said.

"How awful," I said.

After that he turned away for a minute as if not to let me see his face, I think talking about it had made it come over him again, if you know what I mean, and he felt a bit rotten, but it ended all right, because when he turned back he was smiling, and he said, "What about coming into my garden, Smith, and seeing my rabbits?"

"Have you got any?" I said.

"How could you see them if I hadn't?" he said.

"I see what you mean," I said.

Well, anyway, we went out into his garden, and, honestly,

"I scarce believed that which I saw, And counted up to ninety-four,"

actually it was ninety-five, but I had to take one off to make it rhyme.

"My hat, Sir," I said.

"Yes, they are a nice little lot," he said.

"I'd call it a big lot," I said, "doesn't it take you *une bonne temps* to feed them all?"

"What?" he said.

"A good time," I said. "I thought you might speak French."

"Oh," he said. "Well, I don't feed them, they feed themselves. Would you like one?"

"I'm afraid I've only got sevenpence," I said.

\* Rabbit, not spider. Author.

"I mean as a present," he said.

"Oh, Sir," I said.

He told me that he really didn't like rabbits, and that he was only keeping them to help to win the war, and that he had so many it would be doing him a favour if I'd take one. So the upshot of it was that I did, and he not only gave me the rabbit, but a hutsh with it, and let me take it back on a wheal-barrow.

Now, I have told the reader that I don't know anything about rabbits, and so doesn't Green, so we did what we always do with animals we don't know about and gave it several kinds of food to choose from. These were (a) a leak, (b) a parsnipp, (c) a peice of bread, (d) cheeze rhind, and (e) a lump of sugar. It tried them all but "e," so we took that back and let it get on with the others, and at the end of the first day it seemed to be all right, at least I thort so.

"I beieve he's going to be happy," I said.

"He looks a bit funny to me," said Green.

"In what why?" I said.

"He seems to be thinking," he said.

"You can be happy when you're thinking," I said.

"Are you happy when you're thinking?" he said.

I thort, and said, "No."

"Then why shuold rabbits be?" he said.

At first it seemed he was right, but then it seemed he wasn't.

"A person dosen't think of the same things as a rabbit," I said, "and the things I think of genrally hapen to be rather sad."

"I'll bet you've never thort of anything sadder than that rabbit is thinking of," he said, and then I stoped or we'd of gone on for ever.

But next day when I looked at Montigue, that being what we called it, it looking like someone we knew called Montigue, I had to agree with Green that it looked funny. In fact, very funny.

"It may be the wheather," said Green.

"It may be," I said. "My spider's looking a bit funny to-day, too."

"His eyes seam watery," said Green. "Perhaps it's too bright."

"I think you've hit it," I said.

So we covered the hutsh up with a large shaul, and it was next day, when I peeped through the shaul, that I got my first shock.

"My hat," I said.

"What?" said Green.

"There are two," I said.

"Don't be silly," he said.

"Well, look," I said.

He looked and said, "There are three."

"My hat," I said.

We put the shaul back and wondered if there was anything we ouht to do, but we cuoldn't think of anything, so we went away and tried to forget about it. But we cuoldn't, and so presently we went back to see if we'd seen right. I mean, the new rabbits were very small, well, nacherelly, and the light was so dimn they may have been something else.

"You look first," I said, and wile he looked said, "Are there three?"

"No, five," he said.

"Oh, no," I said.

"Not counting Montigue," he said.

Then I looked.

"I make it six," I said.

"This is geting serious," he said.

"It must be a mistake," I said.

"How cuold it be?" he said.

"I don't know," I said, "but it must be."

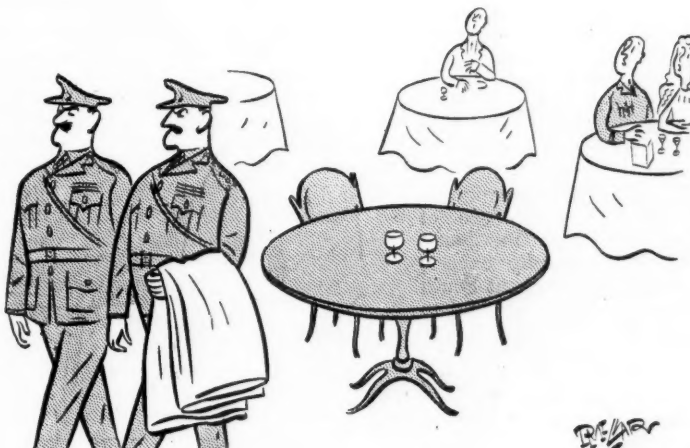
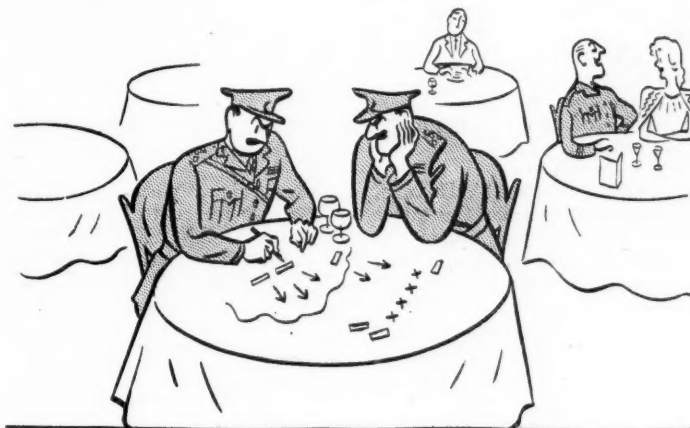
We went away again, and when we

went back again, there were nine. We thort then we'd better stay, becorse the momint our backs were turned more seemed to come, so now we stayed, and, lo! there were no more!

Of corse I now guest why Mr. Doowinkle had so many round his garden and why he hadn't minded spairing me one, and the reader will also guess why, in spite of its being rather delikate, I am giving him or her this solemn warning.

What is going to hapen next we don't know. You see, to be quite sure it wasn't a mistake we looked it up in a book called *You and Your Rabbit*, and it says (I swear) that a tame rabbit can have 58 in one year, and that as all these can have others jolly quickly, and so on, if you know what I mean, in four years you can have 1,274,840 rabbits. It's enoufh to make one swoon.

Anyhow, we now call it Miss Montigue, and I supose all one can do is to wait.



## At the Play

### "MOSCOW BELLS" (COLISEUM)

It is nearly half a century since a famous Liberal astonished England by announcing "We are all Socialists nowadays." Whether or no we have so far moved on as to be all Communists by now—His Majesty's Treasury plainly owns the traditional "yearnings for equal division of unequal earnings"—we are certainly all Russophile, and *Moscow Bells* will issue their peal to welcoming ears.

This Muscovite carillon offers a curious medley of entertainment. After the almost inevitable Tschaikowsky (1812 and All That) we proceed to the shores of Lake Ilmen, where, in happier times, the minstrel Sadko struck the trembling lyre and thus attracted the attention, both of the local swans and of Rimski-Korsakov. The former, as we know, at least in Russian, always spell ballet, while the latter spells opera, more or less grand.

The Coliseum allows Sadko and Rimski very good measure. As they say up the road at the Hippodrome, "Get a Load of This." The first half of a generous entertainment is almost entirely operatic, with *Sadko* and his *Fairy Princess* in full song on the bonnie, bonnie banks of Lake Ilmen. The minstrel is enabled in the end to take the high road to the West, for which he is eager, and the maidens, who have ceased to be swans under the suasion of *Sadko's* lyrical touch, no doubt abandon their amphibian ambitions and go back to the more tranquil pleasures of pond-life.

*Sadko*, with his flaxen wig and saffron tunic, reminds one of *Patience* and Castle Bunthorne and so one continually expects him to start singing about South Kensington, but he is faithful to Muscovy and Novgorod. And why not? It is an exciting place, where anybody may turn up, even a Hindu who has no political opinions but brings to Russia what has so aptly been

called "the noble unreason of a tenor voice."

In the second half the items are prudently more brief and offer a considerable range of diversion. DELA LIPINSKAYA gives a glimpse of charmers down the ages from Helen of Troy to Miss DIETRICH of Hollywood, and adds

cordial joy. It is perhaps natural that the singer should be more at home with its simple jollity than with the sharply calculated humours of Western vaudeville.

"Quiet flows the Don," we used to read, thinking drowsily of lectures long ago. But not so quietly when the

Don Cossacks arrive (on hobby-horse) to sing and dance upon the moonlit terrace of a very English-looking country-house. The laughing cavaliers follow four short episodes of ballet in which Russian history is "potted" from the age of the stone axe to that of the conveyor-belt. Peter the Great lets in the light from the West, and then we are shown the triumph of modern mechanized Russia, whose young people combine a tip-toe ecstasy with the service of the lathe.

The ballet is cut very short and no doubt it is not of Russia's finest. But it would be wise to have rather more of these swift

symbolic flutterings through the Russian centuries and rather less of the songful *Sadko*, whose musical vagrancy in the Russian Lake District is a long, long trail. Viewed as a whole, this entertainment is "nowhere to go for a laugh," as the American student defined MATTHEW ARNOLD, but Miss LIPINSKAYA does much to remind us that we are sitting in a music-hall. Elaborate jests about MUSSOLINI, whether coming from East or West, are apt to hang heavy in the playhouse air. The dancing animates and decorates when the chance arrives. The division of the affair reminds one of nursery discipline. There is a very solid helping of operatic bread-and-butter before we are permitted to reach the cakes and ale of ballet and vaudeville. I. B.



IMPRESSION OF THE GUSLAR (LAKE ILMEN IN DISTANCE)

to these cabaret pleasures (in English) a hilarious return to Russia with the folk-song "Chiki-Chiki." The Russians have always a charming capacity for gargling with high spirits, and this ditty has a guttural as well as a



MUSSO-FIGARO

"She wore a grey dress and coat, with maroon hat and accessories and a spray of car-accessories and a spray of carnations."—*Local Paper*.

Carnation, windscreen-wiper, petrol-tap, carnation . . .





"You want to go by the Elephant."

## Through the Window

THE sudden roar as an express train flashed past the windows made me jump. I looked round the compartment. A fat woman opposite regarded me with an expression of mingled pity and horror. And of course I knew why—my old weakness. I cannot sit in a railway carriage without entering into serious competitive games with the kaleidoscope of the windows.

On this particular occasion I had been engaged in the task of making every telegraph pole pass directly beneath the lower edge of the "No Smoking" notice. This feat demands great watchfulness and foresight. The eyes roll in their sockets, the neck cranes, the body shrivels and elongates itself by turn. One must be ready for instant action on emerging from tunnels, for the slightest unevenness in the track can prove fatal to one's purpose.

The spectator is of course unaware of the significance of such subtle gestures as are necessary, and invariably assumes madness in the performer.

My best achievement with telegraph poles occurred on the L.M.S. line between Nuneaton and Tamworth. I was able to travel the whole distance without once allowing a pole to pass through the letter K, but my success was not earned without extraordinary exertions. Twice I was compelled to throw myself flat on the floor and for part of the journey I perched precariously on the luggage-rack.

A more common form (with me) of this window gaming is the attempt to manoeuvre a smut or stain on the window so that it rides the heavens without interference from trees, buildings, embankment or any other wayside obstruction. I am now of the opinion that dead flies make the most suitable motifs for this enterprise, and

I have on occasion resorted to catching and affixing the insect when inorganic stains have been absent. I recall too my *fiancée's* unreasonable tirade of abuse when at the Gare de Lyons I inspected half a dozen compartments of the Blue Train before finding a window of satisfactory dirtiness and, in consequence, lost our seats.

In omnibuses my mind is occupied with mathematical rather than with two-dimensional problems. More often than not my efforts are involuntary. I begin to count doors, shops, men with moustaches, soldiers, inns, fire hydrants or bench-marks. It must be the mass-observer in me. The computations are accompanied by jerks of the head which become more and more frenzied as the vehicle accelerates. However, it is quite easy, should these motions excite the interest of fellow passengers, to simulate a frowning disapproval of the chaotic state of British roads or of the waywardness of the driver.

The fat woman was still staring. I wondered what she thought of me.

Why on earth was she making those idiotic faces? It looked to me as though she were trying to make the embankment railings run through a patch of steam on the window.

It is now a punishable offence to  
burn or destroy

### WASTE PAPER

—but surely YOU are not one of  
the people who ever did. Never-  
theless why not try to make this  
week's total of saved paper

A RECORD?



"Wake up, old chap, time for you to go off duty."

### A Chance for the Swiss

THE man who had matches but no cigarettes and the man who had cigarettes but no matches supplied one another's deficiencies in silence. Then the older sat back, puffed, and inspected his companion pensively.

"I can't think why the Swiss don't come in."

"What," inquired the other, welcoming a discussion, "could they do—except file down their mountains, p'raps, and let the Germans through? And then there would still be the Portuguese."

"Oh, damn the Portuguese!" exclaimed the first man. "The Swiss are the ones I am concerned about. Do they realize these confounded Japs are in? I may tell you that I once bought the Japanese *lemonades* all round for beating us at Marlow Regatta."

"Really?" said the other. "It must have been before the days of coca-cola, I suppose?"

"It was in 1936," said the first man. "Stroke was called Nigishi and grimaced all the time. Why a fellow asks for lemonade if he is going to pull faces drinking it, I do not know. Five and Six in the crew wore thick-rimmed glasses, and not a man was over ten stone. We thought they were perfectly inane to go in for the race, especially as they had come all the way from Tokyo, giving away two

stone a man, and they looked like a lot of monkeys on a stick. To make it worse the blighters went off at fifty-two a minute and took us by surprise. Actually, apart from being a bit irritated, we didn't worry much because we thought they would blow up at half-way; unfortunately they didn't. They kept it up all over the course—precisely as they are doing now, leaping from one innocent little island to another all the way to Australia—and still grinning probably. And look at the effect on people. 'It can't last,' we say; 'they're going too blinking fast. Something will seize up in a minute.' I said that myself after Marlow. 'They won't do that,' I said, 'at Henley. Dear me, no.'"

He paused for reflection.

"They wore silly little white caps, the jackanapes."

"But don't all rowing-men wear little white caps?"

"Not to row in," said the other. "They wear them on the stewards' enclosure afterwards. Their white trousers are worn short to show their pink socks, and they carry umbrellas. That is the correct costume. And it is no good Japanese coming here and trying to be different."

"I never quite know why people on the lawn do wear caps," said the other. "People don't go to Lord's in cricket caps to show they are old players.

You might as well go to Wimbledon to watch tennis carrying a few old tennis balls in a string bag to show you once played."

"Ah!" said the first man. "But cricketers wear their caps to play cricket in. Rowing-men do *not* wear their caps when they row; so, having bought the things, they have to wear them afterwards."

"They look so silly worn with suits."

"My dear chap, the Japs rowed in them, which was sillier. They won, which was more ridiculous. And they drank lemonade, which was exasperating. When an Englishman wishes to buy beer for the people who have shown him up at something he thought he was good at, it is damned patronizing to want lemonade, and if they were only taking it to oblige, one would rather they did not have a drink at all."

The other altered his position.

"What happened at Henley?"

"Exactly what I said would happen. As soon as they came up against people who mattered the Japs blew up, and Stroke, I am glad to say, stopped grinning."

"Good for us!"

"Not us. It was the Swiss who did it. But what was so decent of them was that *they* had the grace to do it rowing in the English style. Well—if they could beat the Japs up then, why don't they come in again and do it now? It would be damned good propaganda in my opinion. Especially if they did it in the English style."

### The Turning of the Tide

WHEN Aunt Emma decided that she and Uncle Egbert must move into a smaller house, and Uncle Egbert decided that he and Aunt Emma had better stay where they were, deadlock appeared to have been reached.

"We're in a small house already," said Uncle Egbert.

"But not in a smaller one, dear," said Aunt Emma, and she sent for Laura to help her with what she unflinchingly called the Move and what Uncle Egbert referred to as All This Nonsense.

Laura, like a great many other people more than twenty-five years old, had been told seventy-four times by various officials that her name would be indexed and that she would be called upon when needed to work for her country. (They all seemed to think that her country would have to

be in the last ditch before it was reduced to *that*.) And Laura's relations had all said, Well, it was bad luck, but of course only the young were really wanted now, and she could best do her bit by helping the relations to run their houses, look after their evacuees, nurse their invalids, get their spring-cleaning done, and deal with their points-coupons.

So that Aunt Emma's summons came as no surprise.

"What I want, dear, before we settle anything further," said Aunt Emma, "is to see how much we can get rid of. We have got to *simplify* life. Don't sit down. I've been turning out all the old drawers and cupboards that haven't been touched for twenty years, and the sofa seemed the only place for the china. And don't lean on that table, dear, it came down from the attic and one leg is very doubtful indeed. Take care of the old parrot-cage—it ought *never* to have been put away in that condition. And mind your feet—I simply had to put all those books on the floor. Your Uncle Egbert's father was always so passionately interested in anything to do with Missions."

Laura found a chair that only had two ostrich-feather fans and a packet of moth-balls and a blue vase on it, and sat down.

She said afterwards that to see Aunt Emma simplifying life, huddled on the floor in the middle of bits of a grandfather clock, and a morocco dressing-bag that had obviously once been bright purple, and holding dozens of keys between her teeth, seemed to bring the war right home to one.

Anyway, there wasn't any grandfather clock at The Homestead, and never had been.

Aunt Emma told Laura to stay where she was and not move and that she could do it better alone, and Laura would help her best by not doing anything at all, and it was simply a question of finding out which key would open the old dressing-bag that Aunt Emma hadn't touched since her visit to Switzerland after influenza years ago.

Aunt Emma tried a key that looked like a watch-key on the dressing-bag, and then a couple of latch-keys and one that Laura thought might have been used for the dungeons at Chillon in the old days and brought away as a souvenir, and several more that *might*, Aunt Emma said, be the key of the cellar that Uncle Egbert had lost more than a year ago, but she didn't think any of them was quite the right shape.

They weren't quite the right shape for the dressing-bag either.

No one could have been more

surprised than Aunt Emma, unless it was Laura, when the thirty-seventh key actually turned in the lock and opened the bag.

"There are some odds and ends in it, I know, that I can get rid of," Aunt Emma said. "I've told you and Uncle Egbert that practically everything has got to *go*, and that we've got to live much more simply in a smaller house."

Laura, who has always been Uncle Egbert's girl rather than Aunt Emma's, said that smaller houses were difficult to find—but Aunt Emma answered that that was neither here nor there, and turned out the dressing-bag. . . .

Laura's account of what followed began with the statement that they were both struck dumb on the spot—and one had to let it pass.

The odds and ends comprised a rubber hot-water bottle, a pair of flawless silk stockings, a pot of face-cream and a tube of glycerine, a packet of shampoo-powder, a small tin of chocolate biscuits, and two unused cakes of scented soap.

"I remember thinking," said Aunt Emma in a dazed way, "that they'd all come in handy next time one travelled abroad."

They were still looking at the soap when Uncle Egbert came in and said that if Aunt Emma was *still* bent on this nonsense he'd heard of a villa on the Jumpington Road.

But Aunt Emma said: Never mind, things were perhaps not as bad as she'd supposed, and she had plenty to do where she was, looking through old hoards.

E. M. D.

## To J. L. Garvin

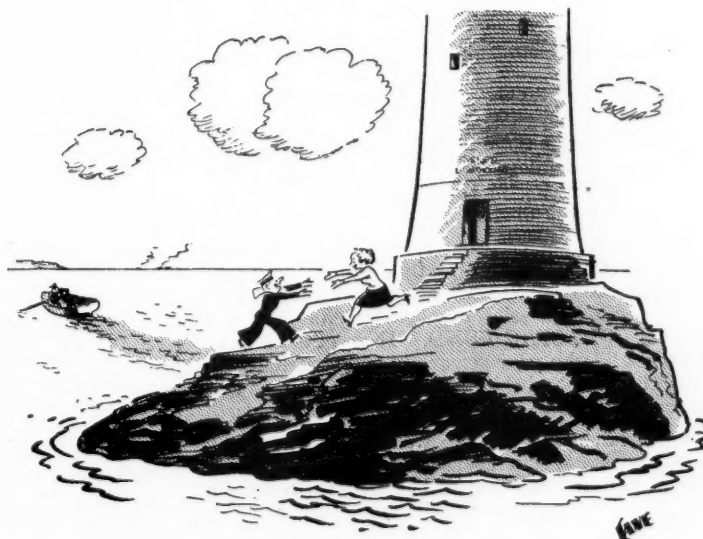
THE little fellows laughed that you were long;  
The feeble fellows never like the strong;  
The crooked creatures do not love the straight—  
But all, I think, agreed that you were great.

You did not always rollick or rejoice,  
But all the time you spoke with England's voice.  
Though rude men talked about "The Cliveden Set"  
Nobody asked "Which way does Garvin bet?"

Newspapers get new masters in a night;  
But it takes more to teach a man to write.  
So we shall miss the thunder and the flame,  
And Sunday morning will not be the same.  
A. P. H.

"A book strongly to be commended. The author sees that the remedy for the breakdown of our civilization lies not so much in political and economic reforms as in 'imaginative indolence' brought about by mechanical pleasures and the dull routine of urban life."—Church Paper.

It's a point of view . . .



"Home is the sailor—home from sea."



## Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

### "East is East and West is West"

*Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (MACMILLAN, 42/-) is an immensely long book by REBECCA WEST, much too good to miss and quite impossible to skim. It is a kind of guide to Yugoslavia in which chance companions become intensely living characters and notes on bizarre brilliant costumes turn to metaphysical discussions of art forms or methods of Government; where every stroll abroad springs to flaming adventure and every street corner is marked by a building that will hail down twisted tormented histories of a thousand jagged years. The whole thing is brilliantly done, with the quality peculiar to the writer of moving so persistently on high emotional levels that the occasional rhapsodizing over triviality can be accepted without demur. Her underlying thesis is the loss of virtue and beauty, inherent or derived from the Byzantines, suffered by South Slav races driven into mutual hatred by Roman, Turkish or Austrian tyrants, who all applied too well the bitter old maxim—*divide et impera*. It is the tragedy of the Balkans that division comes there no less readily than heroism. What miseries are being endured in Serbia to-day cannot be guessed, but the author believes that when salvation from the defiling touch of German imperialism is achieved, here is something of untold value for the world. This message is profoundly important at a time when we may look forward for many years to seeing the rise of Slavonic influences.

C. C. P.

### Gulliver Without Swift

The *Gulliver* of Mr. HAROLD WESTON's *Second Voyage to Lilliput* (COLLINS, 9/6) is an ugly powerful Australian, Paul Wyndham, who, after serving in the last war, settles down in England, and rises from the ownership of a second-hand clothes shop to the control of a chain of tailoring establishments, marriage with the daughter of a marquis, and an earldom. As Dean SWIFT's *Gulliver* is a failure in Lilliput, it might be supposed from Mr. WESTON's title

### "A THOUSAND THANKS"

"A THOUSAND thanks, the men and myself are most grateful to you. There are still bitter East winds blowing in the bleak places where the guns are, and the woolies are much appreciated."

Letters of appreciation reach us from many directions, expressing the gratitude of the Fighting Forces, of the bombed and homeless, of the hospitals and many others who benefit by gifts from the PUNCH COMFORTS FUND. These gifts are only made possible by your generosity and contributions. Please help us to help those on whose courage and unceasing efforts so much of our liberty depends.

If you have helped us with contributions already will you please help again? If this is your first introduction to the Fund will you please become a subscriber? Donations will be gratefully acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

that he had written his novel in order to confute SWIFT's view that a great man is sure to come to grief among pigmies. There is, however, no evidence of any such intention in Mr. WESTON's book, which opens vividly enough but soon tails off into a series of imperfectly-connected scenes, written apparently for no other purpose than to exhibit Mr. WESTON's artistry in language and knowledge of life. His knowledge of life is condensed into epigrams which, though concise, are also banal—"Life is a huckster's shop smothered in labels—mostly misleading." "There was only one Socrates and such a hell of a lot of Athenians." His artistry in language echoes MEREDITH at his worst. MEREDITH's excesses may be excused because of the age in which he lived, but two great wars will have been fought in vain if writers continue to contort themselves in such sentences as this one of Mr. WESTON's: "A moment ago Diana had stood lone wolf, now, after an interval as slight as an enharmonic, she was the plastic Eve listing in the modelling hands of her sister's Adam." Mr. WESTON cannot forget himself. He even introduces himself into his book, as a picturesque figure with "white hair thatching his sloping forehead, his humorous lips changing to his swift moods." If he could lose himself in some theme, he has talent enough to write something worth reading. As it is, few readers are likely to endorse the heroine's remark with which the book closes—"Tony . . . it all means something."

H. K.

### Maker of History

In the light of the renewal of conflict Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL's great history—*The World Crisis, 1911-1918* (MACMILLAN, 18/-), now abridged to one volume and revised as from 1930—will be studied to find the writer rather than to renew memories of a tale all too familiar however well it may be told. Here are the breadth of outlook, the strategic balance, the curt jerking out of concealment of the unexpected essential facts, the refusal of false comfort and the acceptance of the smaller evil for the sake of the greater good that have marked his recent public utterances. Their occasional lighter quality is almost wholly lacking. The drama of the sea battles—the Dogger Bank or the Falklands, for instance—is intensified in the telling because the writer has been able to recapture something of the moment-by-moment suspense that was the price of inner and immediate information. The tragedy of the casting away of repeated offers of sheer victory at the Dardanelles is balanced by the miraculous gifts of fortune at the Marne; the triumphant march of the closing months of war is overshadowed by the cruel squandering of life at the Somme and Passchendaele. For the rest, the abridgment is achieved with a minimum of damage, and if the incidental political apologetics are superfluous now that he has become the very oracle of victory, even Mr. CHURCHILL could hardly be expected to foresee how speedily would be his apotheosis.

C. C. P.

### Schlossgasse, 21

Burning grievances whose very ashes are still white-hot are, one feels, unsatisfactory matter for fiction; and Herr H. W. KATZ has dangerously undermined an all-too-valid indictment of Germany's handling of her Jews by drawing too absolute a racial line between his villains and their victims. In *No. 21 Castle Street* (CHAPMAN AND HALL, 9/6), Jacob Fishman tells his own story from boyhood in the last war to exile just before this one. And throughout a long, thickly-populated, vivid novel hardly an honest motive is attributed to the Brown-shirts and no attempt is



## HOMEWARDS: AN ALLOTMENT IDYLL

Frank Reynolds, March 14th, 1917

made—unless you except some picturesque and sympathetic pictures of practising Jewish life—to explain why the Jew is in some ways difficult to fit into any *goy* social system anywhere. *Yossel Fishman* returns from the Russian front to find his two motherless boys sadly lacking in religious background. ("All the men back from the front complain about their children.") It is the book's impartial *exposé* of the social disruption of war, its almost irretrievable damage to domestic tradition, that, because it is unbiased, makes an indelible mark where the lavish exploitation of Nazi atrocities tends to defeat its object.

H. P. E.

## An Artist's Alpines

Rock-gardening as practised and preached for the last twenty years bears rather more relation to stamp-collecting than to horticulture. The rare oddity that, given appropriate cossetting to make it live, is rather more likely to die than

not is dearer to the Alpine fan than a Persian rose-garden, a French *jardin potager* or a cherry-orchard in Kent. One hoped (surreptitiously) that the war would abate the rock-gardener's *cacoethes*; but it is impossible to withhold a tribute of respect from Mr. RUSSELL LESLIE's *Alpines I Have Grown* (DRUMMOND, 7/6), because he has chosen to commemorate nearly forty of his favourites in a series of accomplished and charming woodcuts. The most decorative of his plants are not, however, alpines. The accommodating and beautiful Lenten hellebores, for instance, are almost cottage favourites now; and a novel pæony (*pæonia cambessedesii*) that, thanks to its gleaming seeds, looks lovely all the year round, is not particularly addicted to rocks. For recondite little miseries the size of a chickweed, Mr. LESLIE does his best in the way of tail-pieces; and a score of connoisseurs will, one hopes, cherish his cuts for one who will carry out his masterly suggestions for growing their subjects.

H. P. E.

## Cycle Ride

"I HAVE pumped up your tyres," said my hostess, as I joined her at the Rectory gate. "They were both down."

"How very kind of you! So nice and firm. Which way do we go to Woansome?"

"There are two ways. Across the Common, which is pleasanter; or along the high road. On the high road we meet convoys. Across the Common we must pass Mrs. Grott's cottage, which I did not wish. However, we will risk it."

"Twice I have had small unpleasancesses with Mrs. Grott. On one occasion I and Mrs. Teetré were judges at the Flower Show—in 1938, to be exact. We had to decide which was the best cottage pie. We tasted twenty-two. I have never cared much for cottage pie since, nor, I believe, has Mrs. Teetré. However. Unfortunately we gave the first prize to Mrs. Oman, of 'Wee Wun,' quite forgetting that she was not a native of Prattle Parva but merely a Maggot from Ozelstrow. The village was so vexed, especially Mrs. Grott, though we gave her the second prize. She often refers to me and Mrs. Teetré as showing favouritism. Especially me. However . . ."

"On another occasion I took a photograph of the village school, with the children arranged in front. After posing them for a long time, I was in the act of snapping them when little Peter Grott ducked his head and was therefore not in the picture. Mrs. Grott was most unreasonable, and almost said I did it on purpose. However, I took another photograph

of the Grott family only. The Rector considers Mrs. Grott the most tiresome of all our parishioners, but I do not agree. What about Mrs. . . . ? However . . ."

"Here is the Grotts' cottage. The door is shut. Good. No, she has come to the door. We must stop and speak. . . . Good afternoon, Mrs. Grott. What lovely breezy weather! We are riding to Woansome. Yes, I dare say you do wish you could sometimes get out for an outing. What is the matter with little Winston? Thrown his cakey down the well? Dear, dear. But daddy will get it out when he comes back. . . . Of course, I had forgotten, your well is eighty feet deep. Good afternoon, Mrs. Grott. Ta-ta, Winston . . ."

"It went better than I expected. There is Mr. Tumm, hedging. . . . Good afternoon, Mr. Tumm. I missed Mrs. Tumm at church on Sunday morning. Oh, was she there? Wearing her new hat? Dear, dear, how did I make such a mistake? I will explain when I see her. . . ."

"No wonder I did not see Mrs. Tumm. I dare say she was vexed. The Tumms, as you know, are more than touchy."

"Here we are at Ozelstrow. I want to show you the village salvage dump. The prettiest thing. All aubretia in spring and vegetable marrows in the autumn. Beauty and utility. Dear, dear, it has been collected. A pity. A quiet village is it not? No people about. Only faces pressed to the windows. Naturally, seeing strangers."

"The Vicar of Ozelstrow, Mr. Willth, has veget—has lived here for thirty-four years. He is a chess enthusiast. When war broke out he was engaged on a game with an American champion. It had already lasted eleven years."

Mrs. Willth tells me that he takes the chessboard to their bedroom and keeps it by the bedside in case he thinks of a move. His mind is clearest at 3 A.M. The Rector—but can a person with a distaste for chess be just to others? The Rector does not and cannot play."

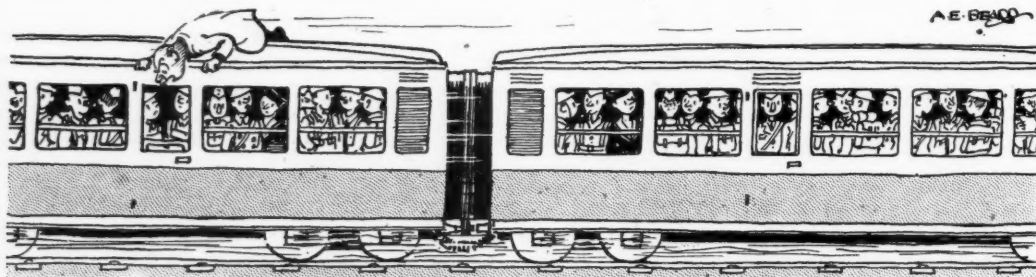
"Four miles to Swith. A nice view from here, isn't it? If it were not for Bluebottle Barrow you could see Salisbury Spire. That dark spot to the left is Prattle Parva. . . ."

"Here we are at Swith. Yes, it is a curious name. From a Celtic word meaning obscure, or dismal, the Rector believes. Here are the gates of the Soote-Bealey mansion. One wing is haunted. It seems that a Sir Peregrine Soote-Bealey dropped a small coin some time in Queen Anne's reign and is still looking for it. The villagers say that on still nights one can hear him ripping up the floor-boards and tapping the wainscot. Swith is quite boastful about its haunted house. We have none in Prattle Parva."

"Council houses. We are near Woansome. I propose to call at the Vicarage. Mr. and Mrs. Blonnie are old friends. . . ."

"How nice to see all these shops—four, five, no seven—all together! And a picture-house. This is Tottle's. A good draper's, don't you think? There is the very bag I want for Mary's birthday. But Mrs. Oyle's Abraham is errand-boy there, and Chubstons would be sure to hear of it. Chubstons sell bags. The village does not mind us shopping at Salisbury, or even Devizes, but they draw the line at Woansome. However . . ."

"Here is the Vicarage. The drive is full of prams! Can we possibly be intruding on a Mothers' Meeting?"



"I said, is THIS the dining-car?"

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